



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SMC Begins Work With \$500,000 in Federal Funding for Upper Des Plaines Watershed Projects

LAKE COUNTY, IL – The Lake County Stormwater Management Commission (SMC) has begun work on five environmental restoration projects worth \$500,000 and approved by Congress. The projects focus on an assessment of natural resources and the design of wetland restoration projects in the Upper Des Plaines watershed. The funds come out of the Environmental Programs and Management (EPM) budget of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Congress earmarked the funding; EPA approved the projects.

U.S. Representative Phil Crane (R-IL), U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL), U.S. Representative Mark Kirk (R-IL), U.S. Representative Richard Hyde (R-IL), and U.S. Representative Paul Ryan (R-WI) led the congressional funding effort.

EMP funds can be spent on planning, engineering, design and studies, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) products, and monitoring, but cannot be spent on construction. SMC, along with its partners on the Upper Des Plaines Phase II watershed management plan, requested funds for projects that will complement the planning efforts in the watershed.

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Projects include:

- Village of Lake Zurich dry detention pond conversion to a wetland design monitoring
- Newport Drainage Ditch subwatershed stream gages
- Co-sponsored projects with the Lake County Forest Preserve District
 - Ryerson Woods hydrology study and wetland restoration
 - Ethel's Woods hydrology study, natural resources inventory, and wetland restoration plan
 - Wadsworth Savannah hydrology study and wetland restoration plan
- Upper Des Plaines Phase II watershed planning
 - Newport Drainage Ditch subwatershed floodplain study
 - North Mill Creek subwatershed strategy
 - Mill Creek subwatershed floodplain model

The Lake Zurich project is a retrofit of an existing dry pond to a wetland retention pond to restore biodiversity, improve water quality and provide for more stormwater storage.

Two Newport stream gages will measure real-life flow and water surface elevation data to be used in a floodplain study currently underway by SMC. The accurate estimate of the floodplain elevation will allow better planning for future developments and fewer flood damages in the entire watershed.

SMC and the Lake County Forest Preserve District (FPD) have signed an intergovernmental agreement on three projects emphasizing natural resource preservation and wetland restoration. FPD will develop a plan to restore the natural hydrology to the Ryerson Conservation Area, which currently is showing the effects of increased development in the watershed. Impacts to plant species and the high quality northern flat woods and wetland areas of the conservation area will be studied.

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A restoration strategy will be developed in the Ethel's Woods Forest Preserve in Newport Township in an effort to restore hydrology to the site to enhance native plant communities and improve wildlife habitat, promote infiltration for groundwater recharge, and provide for flood control and storage.

FPD will also study hydrology of the Wadsworth Savannah by looking at the location of agricultural drain tiles and conducting a drainage analysis of the site for wetland restoration opportunities.

Two projects are targeted for the Mill Creek subwatershed. The North Mill Creek watershed restoration action strategy will incorporate stakeholder participation to develop a watershed restoration plan. A floodplain study, water quality improvements, flood damage mitigation, natural resource protection/enhancements and a schedule for these improvements are part of the Mill Creek focus.

All the projects are complementing the Upper Des Plaines Phase II watershed management planning process, a multi-year, \$9.8 million effort. Partners include SMC, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Kenosha, Lake and Cook Counties. Even though this particular grant cannot be used for construction, the plans and designs will help obtain funding for implementation.

“Our local Congressional delegation obviously understood what a priority flood damage reduction and environmental restoration is to Lake County. These federal appropriations will enhance the watershed management plan to further reduce flooding, improve water quality and habitat, and enhance and preserve high quality natural resource areas for years to come,” said Ward Miller, SMC executive director.

COMMUNITIES AND PORTIONS OF THE FOLLOWING COMMUNITIES ARE IN THE UPPER DES PLAINES WATERSHED:

Beach Park
Buffalo Grove
Grayslake
Gurnee
Green Oaks
Indian Creek
Hawthorn Woods
Libertyville
Lincolnshire
Long Grove
Mundelein
Vernon Hills
Wheeling

MEMBERS OF THE SMC BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

Steve Mountsier, County Board Dist. 17 (Chairman)
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Tom Skinner, Village of Lake Bluff
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AGENCY OVERVIEW

Twelve commissioners – 6 mayors/village presidents and 6 County Board members – govern SMC. A staff of 18 carries out Day to day activities. Key areas of SMC's countywide program include implementation and monitoring of the Lake County Watershed Development Ordinance, watershed management planning and plan implementation, flood hazard mitigation, natural drainage system maintenance, rain gage network m&o, natural resource protection, and public education and outreach. The agency's FY'02 budget is \$2.3 million and is based on property tax income.